

## Poetry.

## What is Life?

What is life?—a rapid stream,  
Rolling onward to the ocean.  
What is life?—a troubled dream,  
Full of incident and motion.

What is life?—the arrow's flight,  
That moves the keenest gaze's eye.  
What is life?—a gleam of light  
Dancing through a stormy sky.

What is life?—a varied tale,  
Deeply moving, quickly told.  
What is life?—a vision pale,  
Vanishing while we behold.

What is life?—a smoke, a vapour,  
Swiftly mingled with the air.  
What is life?—a dying taper,  
A spark that glows to disappear.

What is life?—a flower that blows,  
Kiss'd by the frost, and quickly dead.  
What is life?—a full-blown rose,  
That's soon'd at noon, and withered.

Such is life—breath, a span,  
A moment quickly gone from thee.  
What is death?—oh, mortal man!  
Thy entrance on eternity!

## Who taught You to Swear?

Many years ago, when there were few railroads, a party set out from a Southern city for a long weary journey by stage coach. Amid all their discomfort they had one great blessing. The youthful driver was very cheerful, and seemed intent on making his passengers as much as lay in his power. Many a weary mile over the wretched roads was beguiled by his merry whistle or lively song; the rain poured the horses lagged, and heard above the wind was the carolled air of "Home Sweet Home," or the birdlike whistle of "Blue Bird and Mary." Oh, it is such a joy to see another satisfied and happy in his lot and with his toil! It makes the lowly look up in hope and the lofty look down in humility—it makes the millionaire honor his driver or his footman.

Now that is the bright side of our young stage-driver; why must there be two sides to everything? Before the party halted, after the first day's journey, the jaded horses thought they had gone as far as profitable; and it was contrary to their sense of right that they were pressed on. Our hero on the box coaxed, whistled, patted, and at last whipped them, and still they dragged heavily on; when at length, losing all patience, the pleasant sounds that had cheered the insiders had changed. There did not seem passion in the tones, but, having tried all other motives to speed, the driver now began to swear—as if profanity could impel forward a worn-out horse. "God," and "Jesus," that "dearest of the names above," were repeated with shocking frequency and carelessness. Some of the passengers were unmoved, but others could say with the prophet, "The reproaches of them that reproached Thee, all on me."

Among the passengers was an aged minister. He said nothing at the time, but when they stopped for the night he made himself quite familiar with the driver, asking him questions about his business, and his horses, manifesting an interest in all that he found interested him.

When ready to start at break of day, he asked permission to sit on the box, that he might see the country and talk with him, "for," said he, "I'm very fond of the company of young men." This familiarity and candor completely won the heart of the young man. In the kindest manner he gave all the information in his power.

"You're a minister are you?" he asked, after a little while.

"Yes," my friend, I am a Baptist minister."

"A Baptist minister, are you?" he cried; "why my mother's a Baptist; and when I get home I will tell her about you," and strong filial love beamed in his eye.

"Then your mother is a Baptist—is she a good woman?" asked the old man.

"Indeed she is, sir," replied the affectionate son; "I owe her everything. I don't know a single thing that she did not teach me."

"Are you sure of that, my young friend?"

"Yes, sir, for my father died when I was very small, and left us poor. We were three or four miles from a school, and I was her all, sir, she could trust me so far from her all, sir. So she taught me at home till we moved away from there; Yes, sir, I will tell it to her credit—she taught me all I know!"

"Did she teach you to swear, my son?"

"Cried the old gentleman in a stentorian voice, and clapping his hand heavily on the driver's shoulder. "Tell me, did your mother teach you to swear?" The youth looked thunder-struck. He colored deeply and hung his head in silence.

"Come, my son," said the minister, "you have told me that your mother was a Baptist; I want to know whether she is the right kind of Baptist or not—did she teach you to swear?"

The young driver now looked up. There was none of that dogged insolence which we sometimes see in persons who have been justly reprimanded; no look of defiance, which said, plain as words can say, "I can swear if I please. I'm my own master, and it is not your business who taught me to do it." No, even in his sin he showed the gentle touches of that humble mother's moulding hand.

"I'm mortified, sir," he said, "that you heard me swear last night to my horses. I was very tired, and very anxious to reach L."

"And did the horses feel the oath more than the whip, my friend? We, inside, could not discover that they were at all influenced by it," said the minister.

"Of course not, sir. And as to my mother teaching me to swear, she does not know that I ever took a profane word on my lips. I hope she will never know it; for I believe it would break her heart. I know, as well as any minister can teach me, that swearing is a low and wicked, as well as useless practice; but I've been a thrown into a good deal of bad company in my business, and have fallen into the habit, hardly knowing when I do it. I forget, when I see my patience."

"Do you for, when at home with your mother?"

"Never," her presence forbids it. I could not swear in her hearing."

"And yet you can do so in the hearing of the God you insist, of the God who died for you?" replied the old man. "God forgive the child of a praying mother for such impiety!"

"Sir, I declare, with his help, that you have heard my last oath," said the young man, deeply moved.

"When I left my daughter's house," said the minister, she put a noble great loaf of fruit-cake in my trunk. When we part I will give it to you for a present for your mother, if you will promise to tell her how you got it, and all the particulars of our interview. Confess your sins to her and to God, and that my son, will enable you to keep your good resolution."

The driver promised to do so, and after that, was never heard to use a coarse or profane word. Oh, what a mighty power does a Christian mother still exercise over her beloved wanderers, restraining them from sin and drawing them from its meshes when once ensnared.

This little sketch will be familiar to many, who have heard the incident from the lips of the aged man, who not long since went to his rest.

## The Half Cent.

Hiram Ho't is a prosperous merchant in the country, distinguished for looking after a half cent. If the purchaser gives him a half dollar, out of which he is to take a ninetieth, he invariably returns thirty seven and a half cents. He is a real manager in this particular. Somehow, the price and the change always come right for him to have the half cent. If he were born on purpose to look out for this trifles he could not be more successful. But it creates much talk. Everybody has something to say about it. The old people chat over it at the fireside. The young people jest over it at the sewing-circle. The neighbors discuss it at the depot. In fact, it has become a by-word; so that when the youngsters want to crack a rich joke, they are sure to do it with Hiram Ho't's half cent.

This is nothing new. It is not the first time that a whole neighborhood has been afflicted by a half cent. The man who is sharp in caring for this is usually made the butt of ridicule. He is set down for an avaricious man. He is not popular. He is thought to possess a diminutive soul. He may be rigidly honest. For a right arm, or a right eye, he might not consent to cheat another to the amount of a farthing. He may only demand his just dues.

Samuel Butt, that celebrated English merchant, was always watchful of the half cent; yet he was no stingy. He gave away his dollars by thousands. The poor never turned away from his door hungry or naked. All the region round about felt the blessing of his benevolence. Still, there was not a man who would insist more pertinaciously than himself for the half cent that was his due. And he was just as particular that others should receive the same when it belonged to them. Yet some called him niggardly, solely because he claimed his dues. His name was in bad odor with them.

Now this is the soul of honesty; and who does not love honesty? Why should not men be as upright in the matter of a half cent as in that of a dollar? It may exhibit more love of money to stand for a cent than to do the same for a dollar. But with this we have nothing to do at present. We wish to defend the honesty of the Hiram Ho'ts. You will find them in every village, perhaps in every neighborhood. Let them have their due. In this world of sin, where dishonesty is so rife, and so many study and contrive to get all they can by fair means and foul, give every man credit for honesty that you can. Condemn not a man for demanding the half cent which is his due, unless he is disposed to withhold the same when it belongs to another. We are well satisfied that if all merchants were like our amiable, careful, upright, and economical Hiram Ho't, the world would be much better than it is.—*Congregationalist.*

## HEALTH FOR CHILDREN.

Three times as many children die in cities as in the country, and half the children born do not reach ten years. Such a result could never have been intended by the wise and kind Maker of us all. A difference result must be brought about, by the exercise of the reason which is implanted in all parents, and which if properly cultivated and practised in the lights of our time, would work on a wonderful change in infantile mortality.

1. Children should sleep in separate beds, on mattresses of straw or shocks of corn.

2. Require them to go to bed at a regular early hour, and let them have the fullest amount of sleep they can take, allowing them in no case to be waked up.

3. Except a rug beside the bed, there should be no carpet on the floor of their chamber, no bed or window curtains, no clothing of any description hanging about, no furniture beyond a dressing-table and a few chairs, no standing glass, except a glass of water, and nothing at all in the way of food or plants, or flowers. In short, a chamber should be the cleanest, driest, coolest, lightest, and most barren room in the house, in order to secure the most purity of air possible.

4. Make it your duty to keep your children out of doors every hour possible, from breakfast time till sundown, for every five minutes so spent in joyous play increases the probability of a healthy life.

5. Let them eat at regular hours, and nothing between meals; eating thus, never satiate them; let them partake of plain substantial food, until fully satisfied. Multitudes of children are starved into dyspepsia. The last meal of the day should be at least two hours before retiring to rest.

6. Dress children warmly, woollen flannel next their persons during the whole year. By every consideration, protect the extremities well. It is an ignorant barbarism which allows a child to have bare arms, and legs, and feet, even in summer. The circulation should be invited to the extremities; warmth does that; cold repels it. It is at the hands and feet we begin to die. Those who have cold hands and feet are never well. Plenty of warmth, plenty of substantial food and ripe fruits, plenty of sleep, and plenty of joyous outdoor exercise, would save millions of children annually.

## A CARD.

MISS BOIES, Teacher of Vocal and Instrumental Music, lately from Boston to Hartford, begs leave to tender her services professionally to those who may favor her with their patronage.

Terms made known by application to her at her abode, at Mrs. Clarke's, Duke Street. June 10

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Comprises a general assortment of Shirts, Shirt Col-

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500 BARRELS Superior FLOUR; 100 do.

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